

168. Needs of the Catholic Christians.

MR. ULAHANNAN ULAHANNAN (*Member, Minachil taluk, Group II*) said the Catholics, an important community in the State, had not got fair representation in the public service. Though, in population and education, they were not backward, their community had not been duly represented in the several departments. Although numerous representations had been made on the subject, the Government did not appear to have pursued any definite policy to redress the grievances of the community in the matter. Even if the Government passed any orders on the subject, they were not being strictly observed by the Heads of Departments. While there were able and qualified hands among the Catholics, it was regrettable that their claims were ignored by Heads of Departments when making new appointments.

Very few Catholics had been entertained in the Revenue Department after the Revenue-Devaswom separation. There were more than 400 *Provertikars* in the State, but only a handful had been recruited from among the non-Hindus and non-caste Hindus, after the separation. There was not even a single Catholic among the Tahsildars.

The Catholics were heartily co-operating with the Government in the education of the country by opening educational institutions in various parts of the State. Yet, in the matter of appointments even in the Education Department, they were denied proper encouragement.

Similarly in the Public Works, Registration, Excise, Police, Judicial and other departments, the Catholic Christians were not given any representation worth the name; and the Government had not made any definite ruling to give the community due representation in those departments.

The Government had no doubt laid down the policy that, in the matter of appointments, preference would be given to poorly represented communities, regard being had to efficiency and qualification of the candidates. But it was also necessary to see that the policy was followed in actual practice. Many Heads of Departments considered men of their own community alone as efficient and duly qualified. The Catholics did not wish that any special concessions should be accorded to them in the matter of recruitment to the public service. Only, equal opportunities should be given to all classes of subjects of the State to serve the Government in its various branches of service.

DEWAN'S REPLY : Mr. Ulahannan Ulahannan, let me assure you that the Government are not making any discrimination against the Catholic Christians of Travancore. You mention a few appointments which are not occupied by Catholics ; but you refrained from mentioning the appointments that are occupied by Catholics. It is inevitable that Catholics should not hold as many appointments as others, for the simple reason that they lagged long behind in education ; and it is only now they are beginning to recover lost ground ; and I have not the slightest doubt that, in course of time at the rate of progress they are now making, they will establish themselves in a position of equality with the other communities in the State in the matter of filling Government appointments. But again I can assure you that the Government are doing nothing to impose disabilities upon the Catholic Christians or to discriminate in any way against them.

169. Disabilities of the Christians.

MR. JACOB CURIEN (*Member, Nominated*) said that one of the main objects of the separation of the Revenue from the Devaswom Department was to afford facilities for the free recruitment of Ezhavas, Christians, Mahomedans and members of other communities in the Revenue Department. It was but fair that equal opportunities be afforded to all communities for entering the chief and subordinate offices of all departments. It was not proper to keep out a large section of the subjects of the State, such as the Christians, from entering the Revenue Department. The Revenue-Devaswom separation was effected as a result of the unanimous effort of the non-Hindus and non-caste Hindus. The majority of the people of Travancore depended on agriculture for their livelihood. The well-being of every community in Travancore would be affected if it was not given due representation in the Revenue Department, because land and the officers administering the Land Revenue Department

were indispensable elements in the rural life in Travancore. Hence the importance of the Revenue Department in the State. In England, on the other hand, the Industries Department was the most important because the economic condition of the people there depended on industries. The Revenue-Devaswom separation in Travancore was an epoch-making event. It was brought about as a result of a strong and persistent agitation and the few appointments given to Christians were the direct outcome of such agitation. But although four years had elapsed since that event, there were only about 40 Christian officers in the Revenue Department, including 3 Tahsildars and 3 *Provertikars*, out of a total of about 3,000 appointments. If the Government did not give free admission to all classes of people in the Revenue Department, the object of the Revenue-Devaswom separation would be frustrated.

Fresh appointments in the several departments were generally made by entertaining the applicants in acting vacancies in the first instance. When permanent vacancies arose, the acting hands were said to have superior claims. Therefore, even in making acting appointments, the officers should strictly adhere to the policy enunciated by the Government. It was absolutely necessary that, in every branch of the Revenue Department, there should be Christians, Ezhavas, Mahomedans and members of other communities. The misunderstandings caused in respect of several communities were mainly due to the actions of the subordinate officers of the Revenue Department. Dewan Bahadur Mr. Raghaviah had once stated that the Government were going to formulate a definite policy in regard to recruitment to public service and that that policy would be pursued. But in spite of the lapse of over two years, no such policy had been adopted. Due representation should at least in future be given to Christians, Ezhavas and members of other communities in all branches of public service and the Government ought not to be guided solely by the flimsy and fallacious arguments advanced by the officers against such representation. Until such representation was given, the Christians would not remain content but would continue to agitate. But no agitation inconsistent with their loyalty to the Government would be set on foot.

DEWAN'S REPLY : Mr. Jacob Curien, after all, it is only about three years since the Revenue Department was thrown open to all castes and creeds, and you cannot expect that much will happen within the short space of 36 months or so. I have not the slightest doubt that, in the fulness of time, you will find all communities holding places in all branches and in all grades of the Revenue Department, and that too without any direct intervention or guidance by Government. These things adjust themselves automatically. In the same way that nature adjusts things to the requirements of a living creature's surroundings, so too you will find that economic forces and considerations of education and the natural uplift of efficiency and fitness will ensure that every community gets its due share of appointments where appointments are going—all in good time.

170. Needs of the Ezhavas.

MR. M. S. NANU (*Member, Nominated*) spoke about the need for the representation of the Ezhava community in the public service, the Legislative Council and the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly on the basis of population. He was aware that communal representation on popular bodies was not conducive to the development of an ideal nation where the rights of every individual were respected. But in a country where castes and sub-divisions of castes were recognised, communal representation was a necessity. Further, when the advancement of a community was hampered by none of its fault, it was the duty of the Government to afford every facility to its progress. The Ezhavas belonged to such a community; and in spite of popular representations and the good intentions of the Government, no substantial results had been achieved. The Government should therefore extend to the Ezhava community all sorts of possible concessions till the inequalities that existed between that community and other advanced communities were completely removed.

The member observed that his community deserved a larger measure of representation in public service on the basis of their total population in the State. He admitted that the Government could not possibly provide appointments for all subjects of the State. But so long as the tax due to the Government was collected from all